



Kentucky Writing

A Cluster Leader Electronic Message

A Writing Update from the KDE Writing Consultants

September 2007

WELCOME to a new school year! We hope you had a relaxing summer, and this message finds you doing well. In this issue of the Cluster Leader Electronic Message (CLEM), you will notice a few changes. (I'll also mention it is quite long, but we have lots of information to share). We will still provide announcements and updates for you as we have in the past. However, you will also find new sections on **training opportunities**, **writing resources**, and **cluster leader tips and ideas** (indicated by the logo headers). We hope that you will find this information helpful as you embark on another exciting school year and help teachers in your school with writing-related issues.

FIRST THINGS FIRST. If you are a former cluster leader and need us to update our distribution email list, please email your grade-level consultant to let us know your name, the new cluster leader's name and email address, the grade level, and the school and district. To make things easier, **please copy your email** to Shelia Peak at The Collaborative for Teaching and Learning at speak@ctlonline.org, so CTL has an update on its distribution list as well.

Speaking of CTL, we would like to welcome our new CTL representative, Linda Davis Leugers who will be replacing Elizabeth Dick as our Writing Portfolio Consultant. Elizabeth is now working in Franklin County as the district literacy coordinator, and we wish her the best of luck in her new position. Welcome Linda!

In this issue, please find information on

- Summer Training Sessions
- On-demand Assessment
- Fall Call for Marker Papers
- New Training Opportunities
- Upcoming Conferences
- Cluster Leader Tips
- Writing Resources
- Other Announcements

Summer Training Online

Summer online writing training sessions are available for viewing. You may view them and share them as needed with the staff at your school. The web address for the recordings is <http://kde.webex.com>. Click on “Recorded Sessions” to see the sessions available for viewing. You must have the WebEx Player on your computer to be able to access the files. This player should download and install the first time you attempt to view a session. If you have difficulty getting the WebEx Player to download, please contact your school technology coordinator for assistance.

There are five session topics which total approximately four hours of training. Schools and districts may choose to allow teachers to use these training sessions as professional development if they so choose. However, this will be a local decision in terms of whether to award PD credit or how to award PD credit. Since there is no way we will know exactly who views these sessions (or when they are viewed), **we invite you to plan with your administrators** if you would like to view these sessions for PD credit.

Please find these five sessions available for viewing:

- *The Kentucky Marker Papers*
- On-demand Writing
- Conferencing
- Transactive Writing
- Reflective Writing

Materials for these trainings are available with the cluster leader training materials on our writing resources [Web site](#).

There are handouts packets for the sessions on on-demand, transactive writing, and reflective writing. Materials on conferencing and *Marker Papers* are referenced within the sessions, but there is no specific packet for those two sessions.

We hope these sessions provide further opportunities for you to consider how to continue to improve writing instruction in your schools throughout the coming year.

2007 Writing Portfolio Update

In the past, KDE writing consultants have made a videotape called *Getting Started with Writing Portfolios* discussing findings from the Writing Portfolio Audit, instructional issues, and questions from cluster leaders. This video was usually shown during the fall cluster leader meeting. The taping has not occurred in the last few years, so we are starting this practice again this year through WebEx. In the session, we will be discussing topics of interest such as findings from the Writing Portfolio Audit, instructional issues, etc. The session will be recorded so that cluster leaders may view it at their leisure and use with staff as necessary. The recorded session will be available the week of September 24.

On-demand Assessment

As you may know, the on-demand assessment window for seniors occurs this September. This is a reminder the assessment and where you might go for resources to help students continue to prepare.

First, please review chapter 13 (Part I) of the *Kentucky Writing Handbook*, “On-demand Writing Assessment” which gives you basic information and details about the assessment.

Then, make sure you look at the new released items on the [website](#).

Twelfth-grade Overview

The test for twelfth-grade includes one direct prompt and one passage-based prompt. Each prompt is 60 minutes, and students may have an extra 60 minutes if they so choose. The direct prompt will contain a choice of two prompts for students to choose from. Within each of those task choices, students will be given a choice of two forms (e.g., write a letter or editorial). For the passage-based prompt, students will be given one passage and one prompt. The prompt will be structured like the direct prompt except that it will encourage students to draw on information from the passage to support their response. (Again, see released sample).

Both prompts will be scored using the new analytical rubric (the same rubric you used to score portfolios) for content, structure, and conventions.

Remember these important points:

On-demand assessment tests **transactive** writing for three purposes: narrate for a **transactive** purpose, persuade, and inform. Likewise, there are four forms that are possible on the twelfth-grade assessment (letter, article, editorial, speech). This means that **quality transactive writing is important to embed across the curriculum for the appropriate purposes and forms**.

Another important point to remember is that transactive writing instruction needs to be **on-going throughout the school year and across all grades and content areas**. When instruction occurs this way, teachers and students will be much less panicked about the assessment, and students will perform much better because the skills learned will have been part of their learning process and not simply a part of preparation for a test.

In the spring, fifth and eighth grade students will be given their on-demand assessment. They will respond to one direct prompt and a series of multiple choice questions about revising and editing skills. Like the twelfth-grade assessment, the direct prompt will be scored using the analytical rubric.

Fall Call for Marker Paper Submissions

Thanks for all who have helped us prepare for the *Marker Papers* Project by sending student samples. We have received many samples from teachers across the state.

However, most of the samples we have received have been from the assessment grades—4th, 7th, and 12th grade students (most likely because of the portfolio assessment). The *Marker Papers*, however, span all of the grade levels P-12.

We would like to ask you to encourage teachers in your buildings to submit student samples of writing, particularly from non-assessed grade levels. The only way we will have a complete set of the *Marker Papers* is if teachers submit them. **Teachers need not be cluster leaders or English teachers to submit to the project.**

Copies of the invitations to submit are available at this [Web site](#). Thanks for helping continue to spread the word.

On another *Marker Papers* note, we will begin to develop the selection committee soon. We will send a special invitation out to cluster leaders when we are ready for applications.

Training Opportunities

By September 12, a new WebEx training will be available online at <http://kde.webex.com> under “Recorded Sessions.” This session will be called “New Cluster Leader Training” and is appropriate for new cluster leaders and those cluster leaders with 1-3 years of experience. Other cluster leaders may wish to view the session to “brush up” on the roles and responsibilities of cluster leaders as well as a recommended timeline of events during the school year.

Upcoming Conferences

[Kentucky Reading Association](#), Lexington, Kentucky, **September 20-22, 2007**

“Literacy for All”

[National Council of Teachers of English](#), New York City, **November 15-18, 2007**

"*Mapping Diverse Literacies For the Twenty-First Century: Opportunities, Challenges, Promising New Directions*"

[Kentucky Council of Teachers of English](#), Lexington, KY, Radisson Hotel, **February 1-2, 2008**

“Hats off to Literacy”

Deadline for Conference Proposals: November 1, 2007

[Kentucky Teaching Learning Conference](#), Louisville, KY, **March 5-7, 2008**

“Student Learning for the Twenty-first Century, Every Child, Every Day”

Deadline for Conference Proposals: October 31, 2007

Cluster Leader Tips and Ideas

We would like to use this section each month to provide cluster leaders suggestions and ideas that may help make the process smoother for you. We will include some suggestions we have used in our own practice or ideas that cluster leaders have provided as we've traveled throughout the state. Remember, **these tips and ideas are not mandatory**, but they might help someone with the important role of being a cluster leader.

If you have an idea or a practice that might be helpful to other cluster leaders, please [email](#) and let us know.

Tip for September:

As the new school year gets underway, you may or may not be thinking yet about writing instruction (We certainly hope you are!) However, we all know that the best instruction happens when it is **well-planned and implemented throughout the school year**. We also know that cluster leaders often feel like all the work “falls on them.” A common question we receive is *How do we get other teachers on board?* If you find yourself carrying the bulk of the responsibility for writing instruction and portfolio development in your building, realize that you can't do it all by yourself. It takes teamwork!

Here's an idea used by some cluster leaders that might help.

One idea to facilitate better organization and training opportunities is to create a **writing team**—a team of teachers who work together during the year to disseminate information to staff, to analyze student work, to discuss the latest research in writing instruction, to train their own department or grade level teachers, to provide resources to other teachers, etc.

Given the grade level or organization of teachers within your building, you might consider some alternatives to decide on the best method of organizing a team.

For example, you could form a team of teachers (and don't forget to invite an administrator or two!) who represent the various **departments** in your building. Another idea is to form a team of **non-assessment grade-level** teachers who might work together. However you structure your committee, it should be clear from the beginning that the goal is to help you (the cluster leader) disseminate information to all teachers and administrators who need it—to help keep the focus on instruction when it should be on instruction and then focus on assessment when it should be on assessment. Remember to get clear on the goals of your writing team right from the start and plan to meet regularly to keep up to date.

While you will still be the “official” cluster leader, discussions and trainings with your writing team may help facilitate the information getting back to teachers in other departments or grade levels more smoothly.

Remember, this isn’t mandatory. . . it’s just an idea.

If you have an idea or tip that might help cluster leaders through the process, don’t forget to [email!](#)

Writing Resources

In the new “Writing Resources” section, we will bring you titles of resources we have found that may help you in the classroom.

This month, Depeka recommends

Prompt, Plan, Write! by Mailbox and are available for grades K-5. They are filled with organizers.

Grammar Lessons That Work (grades 3-6) by Lee Karnowski (publisher-Scholastic), *Guided Writing* by Lori D. Oczkus (publisher-Heinemann) has lessons and organizers that could be used for 3-5 grades.

“All of these books would be useful resources for elementary school teachers.” Depeka

Dena recommends

Anderson, Jeff. *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer’s Workshop*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2005.

“This book is appropriate for middle and high school teachers concerned with teaching grammar in the context of writing. It’s likely some upper-grade elementary teachers would also benefit from reading this book.” Dena

Lee Ann recommends,

The new report by the Alliance for Excellent Education (2007), [*Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement*](#).

Available in .pdf on the [Website](#).

“I believe **every** teacher in the state of Kentucky regardless of grade level or content area would benefit from reading this report!” Lee Ann

Other Announcements

Measured Progress has indicated that audit results and reports will be available to audited schools in late fall after the regular assessment data is released.

Writing Resource Materials

Please bookmark this site. All of our writing resource and training materials are on this site.



For your convenience, Cluster Leader Electronic Messages are archived on our Writing Resources Web page on the KDE site.